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Gustave Caillebotte's Interiors: Working Between Leisure and Labor

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Born into immense wealth, Gustave Caillebotte nevertheless “compelled himself to labor at painting.”¹ In so doing he routinely represented the labor of others, both on the job—as in *Les Raboteurs de parquet* (fig. 1)—and “working at leisure,” playing cards (*La Partie de bésigue*, fig. 2) or the piano (*Jeune homme au piano*, fig. 3), knitting (*Portrait de Madame Martial Caillebotte*, fig. 7), or reading (*Portrait d'Eugène Daufresne, lisant*, fig. 8).² The contradictions of this liminal position—with Caillebotte seen as caught precariously between the *haut bourgeois* identity of his family and the working identity of his chosen vocation—has long fascinated scholars, and Caillebotte's class-bound alienation is thus stated routinely.³ The painter's self-portraits, portraits of fellow bourgeois, and scenes of bourgeois domesticity register his “ambivalent and conflictive relation to his own class identity” and the “sense of isolation and loneliness” that was a consequence of his being “part of yet apart from a number of different worlds.”⁴ Caillebotte's “struggle to connect to his family members and friends” is manifest in the superfluities, silences, and tensions that seem to haunt the abundant free time of his well-to-do milieu.⁵



Fig. 1. Gustave Caillebotte, *Les Raboteurs de parquet* (The Floor Planers), 1875. Oil on Canvas, 102 x 145 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Fig. 2. Gustave Caillebotte, *La Partie de bésigue* (A Game of Bezique), ca. 1881. Oil on Canvas, 121 x 161 cm. Louvre Abu Dhabi.

The alienation of Caillebotte's bourgeois world is therefore tinged by the rhetoric of work, and it was by means of this infusion that Caillebotte explored his alienation and sought to fabricate the means of its refashioning. This refashioning was multifaceted: neither an outright rejection of his roots nor a naïve fantasy of being a laborer. If his interiors like *Le Déjeuner* (fig. 4) show him to be “uncomfortable with his class as his social identity,” then his *Autoportrait au chevalet* (fig. 9) indicates that Caillebotte-the-painter was equally fissured and alienated.⁶ Drawing precision from Hannah Arendt's seminal distinction between work and labor, and

contextualizing Caillebotte's painterly practice alongside his other activities, most specifically yachting and philately (understood as forms of "work" in Arendt's sense), I will argue that it was in cross-pollinating work practices on the canvas surface that Caillebotte was able to imagine and image a de-alienated social self. What will emerge through this reading is a new understanding of the importance of work for Caillebotte, and a new sense of the centrality of Caillebotte's routinely elided non-painterly activities to his sense of self, his idea of work, and his painterly project.

Caillebotte's very first major painting, *Les Raboteurs de parquet* (fig. 1), constituted an attempt to triangulate the consequences of his inherited wealth, the labor of others (from which it was extracted), and his deep-seated desire to be something more than a leisured bourgeois. Caillebotte depicts three floor scrapers in the middle of their work; the two foremost workers brace their wiry and half-naked bodies against their planers and the floor, pressing into the wood as they move towards the viewer. In the background, the third *raboteur* unsteadily leans forwards to pick up a tool from the floor with his outstretched right hand. A soft and diffused light radiates through the rear window, only the lower portion of which is visible thanks to the raised horizon, and reflects with a high sheen off both the unplanned floor and the backs of the *raboteurs*. The opened bottle of wine and the conversational inclination of the heads of the two foreground floor scrapers hints at a workplace sociability typical of the Parisian working-class.⁷

The setting is a room in the Caillebotte family's *hôtel particulier* on the rue de Miromesnil, the transformation of which into a studio Caillebotte's father Martial *père* had agreed to fund before his death on 25 December 1874.⁸ That this is an eminently bourgeois space is rendered visually by the prominence given to the gilt molding on the walls and the care taken to ensure the visibility of Saint-Augustin Church through the window, which locates the scene geographically in the Haussmannized

8^e *arrondissement* and therefore securely within Paris's topologized class structure. Yet, if the space represents and materializes Caillebotte's inherited class and wealth, it is also positioned at a moment of this inheritance's reconfiguration and refashioning. The room is quite literally in the process of being transformed. On one level, this is the straightforward extraction of surplus value from laboring bodies to increase the value of the Caillebottes' property; real estate development was how Caillebotte's father had invested the income generated by his prior business venture. Martial *père* constructed this luxurious family home and a multitude of other buildings, the rents from which would constitute a sizeable portion of Caillebotte's income. For more reasons than one, then, this room would have elicited for Caillebotte strong memories of his father, a man who himself had worked hard (at business).

Yet, the fidelity of Caillebotte's descriptive vision—which, as Tamar Garb has noted, lingered especially on calloused hands and the tools they manipulated—indicates a desire to identify with his subjects and their activity of a register quite different from mere proprietorship.⁹ The chromatic transformation of the parquet flooring not only narrativizes the labor of the floor scrapers but also indexes by analogy the work that Caillebotte himself will undertake in his new studio (and is undertaking in painting its refashioning), that is, the work of art as the chromatic transformation of a surface by the manual application of specialized tools to manipulate physical matter. Moreover, the idiosyncratic manner in which Caillebotte has produced the space—utilizing an off-center vanishing point and elevated horizon line—causes the foreground to loom up parallel to the picture plane, visually and materially compounding the thematic analogy by producing the canvas as a saturated double surface upon which both bourgeois and laborer work. At the bottom-right of the painting, where the floor pitches up most drastically and this collapsing is most secure, Caillebotte writes his signature as if it were inscribed on the floor, ready to be planed away—reconfigured by the work of others at this condensed point of fusion with his own.

At the second Impressionist Exhibition in 1876, *Les Raboteurs de parquet* (fig. 1) was shown alongside other canvases set inside Caillebotte's home including *Jeune homme au piano* (fig. 3) and *Le Déjeuner* (fig. 4). Although these are scenes of bourgeois leisure and consumption rather than proletarian production, the hard-working and work-hardened bodies of the *Raboteurs* resonate with Martial and René's stiff bodies, careful attention, and tense hands as they play the piano and eat lunch. In *Le Déjeuner* we see Caillebotte's younger brother René and his mother Céleste awkwardly sharing a two-course luncheon, served by the family butler Jean Daurelle. The heavy silence that blankets the scene precludes both the easy sociability paradigmatic of bourgeois domesticity and the typical workplace sociability of the *raboteurs*. Indeed, the very object whose form ideally encodes and facilitates the desire for prandial amiability—the round dinner table—has been distorted and deformed by Caillebotte, elongated into a lozenge such that it in fact divides its users. Crystalware—sparkling under the light diffused by the lace curtains—clutters the table surface and compounds the scene's atomized quality by juxtaposing material plenitude with social alienation.



Fig. 3. Gustave Caillebotte, *Jeune homme au piano* (Young Man Playing the Piano), 1876. Oil on Canvas, 81.3 x 116.8 cm. Bridgestone Museum of Art, Tokyo.



Fig. 4. Gustave Caillebotte, *Le Déjeuner (Luncheon)*, 1876. Oil on Canvas, 52 x 75 cm. Private Collection, France.

Cast adrift amidst this glittering profusion, René concentrates on his food, pressing his fingers against utensils with a force completely disproportionate to the task. In preparing for this scene of bourgeois familial alienation Caillebotte executed at least one study (fig. 5) of René carving with his utensils upon an empty plate. René's hands are so intensely worked up in pencil and charcoal that they appear almost black. Under the scrutiny of Caillebotte's inquisitive and invested vision, the activity of hands as they manipulate implements becomes unmoored from body and narrative such that it functions as a self-sufficient and (materially and symbolically) overdetermined signifier. In *Jeune homme au piano* (fig. 3) Martial's dexterous hands are similarly doubled "by [their reflection] in the varnish of the marble," becoming an overdetermined presence, as much a part of the instrument as the body that manipulates it.¹⁰ As with the earlier scene of labor—for which Caillebotte also executed numerous preparatory sketches focusing expressly on the activity of sometimes disembodied hands (fig. 6)—the manual manipulation of an object comes to be the central identifying locus of the scene and the physical locus upon which Caillebotte is able to hook his own activity (the manual manipulation of paint across a surface). This motif reverberates through Caillebotte's serial exploration of the bourgeois interior as a space in which leisure—whether needlework (*Portrait de Madame Martial Caillebotte*, fig. 7) or reading (*Portrait*

d'Eugène Daufresne, lisant, fig. 8)—is serious business, requiring corporeal discipline, psychic attention, and, most crucially, manual dexterity.



Fig. 5. Gustave Caillebotte, Study for *Le Déjeuner*, 1875. Pencil and Charcoal [on Paper?] 46.8 x 30.2 cm.

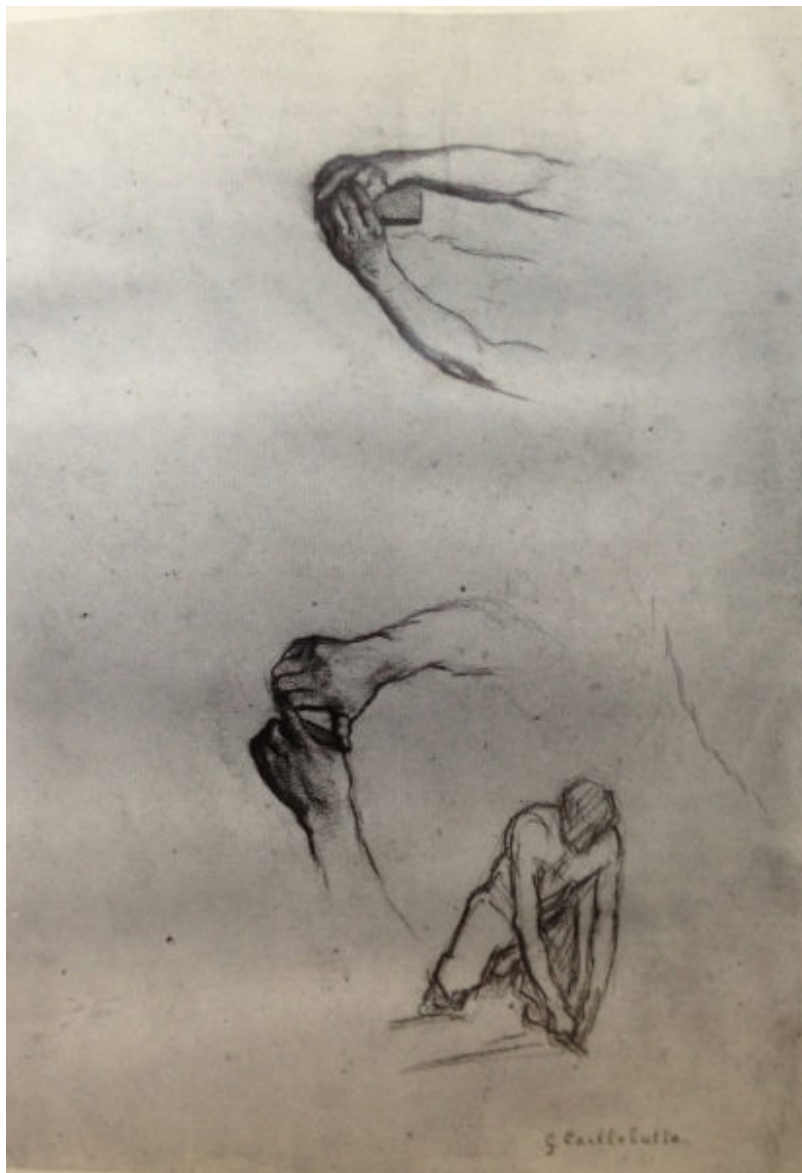


Fig. 6. Gustave Caillebotte, *Trois Etudes pour des raboteurs: deux études de mains et une étude d'homme agenouillé de face* (Three Studies for the Planers: Two Studies of Hands and One of a Kneeling Man from the Front), ca. 1875. Graphite on Cream Paper, 48.0 x 30.8 cm. Musée Pissarro, Pontoise.



Fig. 7. Gustave Caillebotte, *Portrait de Madame Martial Caillebotte* (Portrait of Madame Martial Caillebotte), 1877. Oil on Canvas, 83 x 72 cm. Private Collection, France.



Fig. 8. Gustave Caillebotte, *Portrait d'Eugène Daufresne, lisant* (Portrait of Eugène Daufresne Reading), 1878. Oil on Canvas, 100 x 81 cm. Private Collection.

The off-kilter perspective of *Les Raboteurs de parquet* is repeated in *Jeune homme au piano*, the intensity of which arises from the frightful impression that “at any moment” the piano might slide forward, leaving this “good young man ... unerringly crushed.”¹¹ In this way Caillebotte transliterates into a dramatic visual presence the ephemeral product of Martial's skilled and serious attention, whilst at the same time calling attention to the constructed nature of pictorial space and his hand in its construction. The physical strain of the floor scrapers' work—the friction of planer against wood, the resistive force of the floor against the weight of an entire body transmitted by outstretched arms and tightly gripping hands—had likewise been rendered by Caillebotte only by translating it into the visual phenomenon of foreshortening. In *Le Déjeuner* (fig. 4), the perspectival armature causes the table to pitch up in the foreground, again collapsing the canvas surface with the surface of the scene; where in *Les Raboteurs de parquet* Caillebotte

inscribed his to-be-refashioned identity by means of a signature, it is here materialized by the empty place setting. In these two paintings Caillebotte worked himself into a social group at work or working at leisure in ways that foregrounded his own painterly work; yet, in each, this attempt is ultimately frustrated. In *Les Raboteurs de parquet* (despite owning the space and hiring the labor power of the bodies) Caillebotte is excluded from the implied intersubjective plenitude of a workplace sociability; in *Le Déjeuner* Caillebotte's exclusion is compounded, redoubled, by the fact that the sociability from which he is alienated is itself alienated.

Rather than evidencing a class-bound alienation and an attendant attempt to triangulate an ambivalent identity, Caillebotte's interiors, including *Les Raboteurs de parquet* (fig. 1), have most recently been read as exerting or encoding a desire for *possession* on the part of the artist.¹² In this view, the painting's deformed and distorted perspectival structure works primarily to exert a "ruthless" visual control and to express the sovereignty over capital and laboring bodies that was the inheritance of this wealthy, young, bourgeois Parisian man.¹³ New information about the specificities of his economic status as a rentier has been mobilized to argue that Caillebotte internalized and identified with the conservative values ascribed to that status.¹⁴ In giving visual form to his "possessive energy" Caillebotte has thus been seen as aligning himself to the normative expectations of his bourgeois social milieu and "[thoroughly assimilating] the rhetoric of the fledgling Third Republic" whose political institutions that milieu dominated.¹⁵

To be sure, Caillebotte had a financial interest in the continuation of the laissez-faire status quo that was serving him and his fellow bourgeois so well. In stages over the course of the second half of the 1870s, Caillebotte became a "rentier."¹⁶ He lived off income generated by property, government bonds, dividend-generating stocks, and capital inherited (sometimes

indirectly) from his father. This was not unusual: Caillebotte was among the several hundred thousand who lived off unearned income, and was thus deeply implicated in what Thomas Piketty has characterized as a highly inegalitarian "society of rentiers."¹⁷

The life of a rentier was defined by the absence of work. For Émile Littré he was a "[b]ourgeois who lives off his returns, without a trade or industry"; for Pierre Larousse, he was "the man who lives off his returns[;] one can apply the name [*rentier*] to whomever possesses capital, property, or currency, which allows him to live without the need to labor."¹⁸ As Eugen Weber relates, the *rentier*, frequently a young man with an inheritance, was understood as one who has "retired from business," who "never ... faced regular work at all" and for whom the primary struggle was against "boredom."¹⁹ The means of this struggle were most typically the expenditure of money and "energy" in activities like lavishly decorating one's home (which facilitated the former), going for a vigorous swim (enabling the latter), or throwing oneself into yachting (thus expending both).²⁰ It is perhaps thus tempting to understand Caillebotte's many passions—which alongside painting included philately, horticulture, and yachting—as merely the distractions of a paradigmatic rentier casting about for something to do with his abundant time and money, as excuses for the interludes of a privileged life.

Yet, to extrapolate directly from Caillebotte's class a certain mindset that forms the hermeneutic ground for reading the economy of his paintings runs the risk of striking a false equivalence between Caillebotte's structural class position and his imaginary relation to that position as it manifested in his activity. Rather than dispensing with alienation as an analytical category founded on a Marxist critique of modernity while retaining the restrictive class-determinism of Marxian thought, it will be more productive to retain the former and dispense with the latter. Indeed, in considering the *manner* in which Caillebotte spent his energy and his money (rather than simply the objects upon which he spent them or the sum spent), his contemporaries were forced to rely on a comparison with the activity most singularly incompatible

with being a rentier: that of work. Georges Rivière, for example, understood Caillebotte's 1877 street scenes as revealing him to be "a worker, a hardy researcher, upon whom, I believe, we can place solid hopes."²¹ Gaston Vassy too was struck by Caillebotte's "truly extraordinary activity" at the seventh Impressionist exhibition in 1882: "His hat pushed back, hands in pockets, M. Caillebotte came and went giving orders, supervising the hanging of the paintings, and *working like a porter, exactly as if he didn't have an income of one hundred and fifty thousand francs*."²² As Gustave Geffroy eulogized, "Caillebotte truly had conviction in him, and what he leaves surpasses the occupation of the amateur. He could have taken painting just as an excuse for the interludes of his life ... All the same he compelled himself [*il s'astreignit*, implying rigorous discipline] to labor at painting."²³ In the world of philately too, Caillebotte's colleagues understood that his stamp collection (the consequence of his expending money and energy) revealed his "love for work" and capacity for "laborious study," as well as simply his "refined taste."²⁴

Caillebotte's activity and its products must then be understood as something other than—and indeed following Vassy "exactly" opposed to—a straightforward reflection or expression of his status as a rentier, of what his life "could" have been. In working to paint his property Caillebotte was less celebrating his wealth than investigating the activity from which it was crystallized—labor. If the inherited rentier identity he manifestly found so troublesome was characterized by the *absence* of work, then it follows that a conspicuous *presence* of work should have occurred to Caillebotte as a means of its reconfiguration or transcendence. Yet, however much (in the works examined thus far) he collapsed his own work onto the labor of others, or sought to transliterate the rituals and activities of bourgeois life as if they were work, Caillebotte was, of course, not a laborer in the usual Marxian sense: his labor power was uncoupled from material necessity thanks to his ownership of capital. He did not sell his paintings on the market, as his Impressionist peers did; painting for him was not a means of making a living.

In attempting to square this circle—that is, in attempting to understand how a rentier might work—Hannah Arendt's writing is especially valuable. In her reconfiguration of Karl Marx's critical language of labor, Arendt creates discursive space for a nuanced and historicized understanding of the productive activities of the kind in which Caillebotte engaged. Since "work" and "labor" in the Arendtian sense are not terms tethered to a class structure, they can be used to render visible activities that would otherwise be either invisible or incomprehensible. In addition, the critique of modernity amidst which Arendt's reconfiguring is historicized chimes closely with Caillebotte's own implicit critique of his historical situation: both Arendt and Caillebotte foreground objects and sociability as the casualties of modernity and signifiers of its alienation, the root cause and potential for reconfiguration of which they likewise both identify as located in the world of production. The class-bound alienation that registers in Caillebotte's scenes of his family's domestic life resonates in the (paucity of) sociable interactions that (ought to) structure it, and the (unruly surpluses of) objects that (fail to) support them. As we have seen, underpinning this exploration of bourgeois ennui is a persistent language of labor, a production of bourgeois bodies working at leisure and ostentatious references to the work of representation that function to collapse it onto the activity being represented.

Arendt uses the term "labour" to describe the activities by which humans attend to the "biological process[es] of the human body" and the reproduction of the species.²⁵ Since to labor is to be "enslaved by necessity," labor is the least human of all human activities; and since its products are consumed almost as soon as they are produced, labor is "worldless," leaving behind no lasting trace of itself.²⁶

In contrast, the activity of work erects an artificial world ("the human artifice") which simultaneously binds and separates us in a web of human relationships and

material things.²⁷ Because they outlast the worker, work's products offer a degree of meaning to the "futility of mortal life."²⁸ Work thus resolves the meaninglessness and worldlessness of labor by producing durable things, "the most intensely worldly" among them being art works.²⁹ Since "the permanence of art" speaks to an immortality "achieved by mortal hands," it most clearly represents the highest goal of work: "the [erection of] a home for mortal men, whose stability will endure."³⁰ Along with "poets and historiographers, ... monument-builders [and] writers," the artist is the paradigmatic worker.³¹

These abstract distinctions are historicized through a critique of modernity, which, for Arendt, effected a reversal of the rightful hierarchy of human activities by subsuming work into labor. With the ascendancy of capitalism in the modern era, all human activities have been levelled "to the common denominator of securing the necessities of life and providing for their abundance," which is to say, "making a living."³² In addition, the concrete ways in which capitalism transformed production, most centrally the "division of labour" and the mechanization of the labor process, have injected the imperatives of nature, and therefore labor, into the domain of work.³³

Concomitant with the ascendancy of labor in modernity was the disappearance of a true public realm in which humans can act. At the summit of Arendt's hierarchy of human activity is action. To act is to actualize one's freedom (not the freedom to choose from among pre-determined options, but to effect a radical, unanticipated, and miraculous new beginning). Humans of necessity act in political communities comprising a plurality of other actors, each of whom brings to bear her unique perspective upon what is being enacted. As such, action is intersubjective and entails speech, since it is at its core communicative. "In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world."³⁴ The ground of action is the tangible world produced by work, since the meaning it produces consists in sharing different perspectives on the world and on the action that

might transform it. The most rewarding activity of which humans are capable is thus the exchange of one's perception of the appearance of the world; the space of such appearances corresponds to the public sphere.

In eroding both the activity of work, by introducing the imperatives of nature (and transforming it into a kind of pseudo-labor), and the product of work (the world of tangible things, transforming it into a pseudo-world), modernity thus consequently eroded the ground of authentic action, which depends upon there being a world of things about which plural perspectives can be shared. It is for this reason that modernity went hand-in-hand with a new valuation of the private realm, as compensation for the loss of the public sphere; in place of "greatness," moderns (like Caillebotte and his peers) had to content themselves with "charm," with "small things."³⁵

Arendt's picture of the impoverishment wrought by modernity accords closely with Caillebotte's, who depicts a private realm in which the sociability that we might align with Arendt's category of action has given way to alienated relationships that are improperly mediated by things. "To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, *as a table is located between those who sit around it*"; yet, as Caillebotte captures so acutely in *Le Déjeuner* (fig. 4), "the world [of things] between [people] has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them."³⁶ The objects are present but have been deformed to the extent that they can no longer serve as the ground for the exchange of perspectives, such that their owners and users are forced into an uncomfortable silence.

Caillebotte's interiors constitute a complex project of self-imaging where processes of "identification and objectification, mirroring and distancing" intertwine and in which the encounter with the other implied an encounter with self.³⁷ It should not be surprising then, with

Caillebotte stuck on “the fabrication of his own mirror image,” that in the only self-portrait in which he directly represents himself at work painting, the viewer should occupy the vantage point of the mirror into which Caillebotte gazes in the attempt to give visual form to his constructed self-identity.³⁸ In *Autoportrait au chevalet* (fig. 9) we see Caillebotte, keeping his gaze fixed directly out of the frame, extend a hand to make contact with the surface of a canvas that is turned and hidden from the viewer. In the background, another figure relaxes on a divan, possibly reading a newspaper. Caillebotte sits awkwardly on a stool, half-turned to face the viewer, dressed in a loose, black smock that cuts a void in the center of the canvas.



Fig. 9. Gustave Caillebotte, *Autoportrait au chevalet* (Self-Portrait with Easel), 1879–1880. Oil on Canvas, 90 x 115 cm. Private Collection.

As with *Les Raboteurs de parquet* (fig. 1) and *Le Déjeuner* (fig. 4), the painting hinges upon a fusion of surfaces, in this case “presenting precisely what he sees in the mirror reflection at the moment of painting, as if the surface of the mirror and the canvas, as we see it, were one.”³⁹ The canvas upon which Caillebotte (in the painting) works is radically foreshortened (compressed and distorted like the bodies of the floor scrapers), and the sole narrative act consists in the manual application of a tool (*pinceau/rabot* and *racloir*) to a surface (*toile/parquet*) to effect a chromatic transformation; for both Caillebotte and the floor scrapers, the physical act of production

exerts a deforming effect on the body, fragmenting and evacuating Caillebotte's, compressing and condensing the laborers'. However, *Autoportrait au chevalet* is cluttered with objects: an over-stuffed floral sofa is positioned behind Caillebotte, a plant awkwardly creeps into frame from the left, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *Bal du moulin de la Galette*, 1876 (part of Caillebotte's collection of Impressionist paintings) curiously dominates Caillebotte's intervention into the genre of the artist's self-portrait. As such, the Caillebotte that we see Caillebotte working to render, cut off at the knees and inelegantly posed, fails to adhere into a coherent subject and instead fragments into pieces of overdetermined fetishistic importance (the hand), disturbing absence (legs), and deliberate elision behind a barrier of thick, black, paint (crotch).

As a work of art about the *work* of art (the transfiguration of a thought into a thing by means of the "the primordial instrument of human hands"), *Autoportrait au chevalet* (fig. 9) fails both to disclose the identity of the worker, and to produce the plural sociability that are each the hallmarks of action founded securely upon work.⁴⁰ Despite their physical proximity Caillebotte and the man who might be Richard Gallo mutely ignore one another. In contrast, *Les Raboteurs de parquet* (fig. 1) is a work ostensibly about labor. Labor is eminently bodily; stimulated by pain and often painful itself, labor manifests in private bodily sensations that resist communication. As we have seen, Caillebotte closely scrutinized the physical activity of the laborers in his employ (who must sell their labor power to him in order to *make a living*). As "implements and tools ... determine all work and fabrication" the motif of hands manipulating tools, as we have also seen, was central to this and Caillebotte's other domestic interiors.⁴¹

Yet, the workplace sociability that Caillebotte implies is at odds with Arendt's suggestion that the laborer "is imprisoned in the privacy of his own body, caught in the fulfilment of needs in which nobody can share and which nobody can fully communicate."⁴² The kind of activity that interested Caillebotte thus does not seem be the same as that which captivated his peers—Émile Zola, Edgar Degas, Camille Pissarro, and even Claude Monet—

in whose company he is typically placed. The crushing, animalistic, and endless toil of Zola's Gervaise Macquart; Degas's *repasseuses*, *blanchisseuses*, and *petits rats*; Pissarro's *paysans* (caught in the endless cycle of the seasons); or Monet's *charbonniers* offered Caillebotte no stable basis for his analogistic process of identification/objectification, since nothing in his experience equipped him to understand labor on its own, crushing, wordless, and worldless terms. What Caillebotte wanted instead were forms of labor that could more readily be made to speak to his experience as a worker who works to triangulate his inherited and chosen identities.⁴³

Although he focuses on the activities of bodies, in *Les Raboteurs de parquet* (fig. 1) Caillebotte thus explicitly precludes the wordlessly somatic (which we might also signify by the term "affect") that is the prerogative of Arendt's understanding of labor proper. Michael Fried understands this painting as indicative of Caillebotte's attempt to recover "a certain realism of the body" whilst remaining within the ocular-centered remit of Manet and the Impressionists.⁴⁴ Caillebotte's "materialist Impressionism" is, for Fried, achieved through combining attention to effects of light which dazzle the eye and perspectival contrivances which arouse an eminently bodily feeling of vertigo.⁴⁵ It is in this framework that Fried sees Caillebotte as producing a variety of bodies caught in states of absorptive closure, a "corporeal Impressionism" of phenomenological orientation.⁴⁶ Caillebotte's nascent studio is illuminated by a soft light which, as it reflects off the unplaned floor and off the backs of the floor scrapers, gives to both a sheen that simultaneously delineates and equates them; in picking out the components of the room, its undifferentiated diffusion treats tools, materials, and bodies with equal dispassion. Skin is given no special treatment and is made to blend with the floor, with both surfaces projecting pools of clear, white light. Like a canvas stretched across its support, the skin of the floor scrapers seems to have no real thickness or materiality of its own: ribs, elbows, tendons, and muscles protrude and stretch skin, while light appears to seal it, precluding corporeal or affective

excess; the laboring body is wrapped up in and contained by light.

The sheen and gloss of diffused light as it reflects and refracts around the room, then, offers a readily consumable visual spectacle of *labor*, untroubled by affect or the body (labor). Caillebotte's contemporaries, when they wanted to conjure labor, contrariwise focused expressly upon the affective, the "toil and trouble" of labor.⁴⁷ The pathos of, for example, Degas's yawning *repasseuse* (*Repasseuses*, ca. 1884–1886) depends upon our identification that the eruption of exhaustion signifies her participation in an activity by which her body becomes a slave to necessity (and pays the price for it). Mouth open, but not to speak, absorbed in the experience of fatigue that visibly permeates her body, she exemplifies Arendt's description of labor's tendency to wordlessness. More than mediating between his split loyalties to Realism and Impressionism then, I would suggest that the spectacular strategies Caillebotte deploys to visualize and screen the laboring body should be understood as a consequence of his desire to exploit the labor of others as the ground for the construction of his own identity as a worker, and his willingness to dispense with (or his unwillingness to see) anything not conducive to this ambition. While the viewer may well "[see] all there is to see," Caillebotte nevertheless prevents the affective and somatic from irrupting into visibility.⁴⁸

La Partie de bésigue represents five of Caillebotte's friends gathered around a small table in the apartment he shared with Martial (sat on the right in a brown jacket, whose presence makes the group six) playing and spectating a game of bezique. Delineated with interested precision, enclosed in appropriately concealing bourgeois clothing, these middle-class bodies (with only a single exception) are taut and tense: Maurice Brault, who is playing against Martial, is for example "wound up tight like a spring."⁴⁹ Although none make eye contact or converse, the

atmosphere is of studied concentration rather than the awkward silence that haunted *Le Déjeuner* (fig. 4); they are bound together as a group by their shared participation in the activity of the game whose concrete implements are the table and the cards. Rather than expand precipitously as it had before, the furniture instead coheres and offers a physical support to the constitution of the group; attracted by the gravitational pull of the game, Édouard Dessomes has pulled a bucket-shaped red velvet armchair up to the table.⁵⁰

The card game of bezique had a defined set of rules that determined the patterns of sociability of its two participants. Within that structure, the iterative back-and-forth of dealing cards to oneself and one's opponent, of playing one's hand, and tallying the scores refined the infinite multiplicity of ludic and social interactions into an anticipatable, repeatable, chain of events. Bezique thus offered an intangible structure for healthy competition and the cementing of social bonds to match the physical structure of objects. Yet, to be sure, the same potential for domestic alienation and anxiety existed: in a study (fig. 10) of a man (perhaps Dessomes), seen from behind and turned to almost three-quarter profile, Caillebotte renders the figure's hands intertwined on the table-top. Distorted and deformed, insecurely attached to arms, this profusion of fingers connotes the anxious wringing of hands. In a scene of domestic sociability, Caillebotte has yet again zeroed in on the activity of hands as a locus both for the performance of class identity and the manifestation of the anxieties involved therein. In the final composition, Caillebotte withdrew from this motif, instead depicting his figures carefully and securely holding, arranging, and manipulating their cards. Expelled from the group, this (potential) anxiety nevertheless registers in the only figure not to participate (Paul Hugot), who instead sinks languorously into the stuffed floral sofa.⁵¹



Fig. 10. Gustave Caillebotte, *Etude d'homme assis* (Study of a Seated Man), 1881. Pencil on Paper, 47 x 30 cm. Private Collection.

Around three decades before Caillebotte sat down to capture his friends playing with all the mute and bodily intensity of labor, Marx was imagining a future after the abolition by communism of the "distribution of labour" which assigns to each "a particular, exclusive sphere of activity" in which "each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes ... [doing] one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming a hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic."⁵² The painter, for example, no longer needing to paint in order to earn a living (no longer needing to labor or work under conditions of laboring at painting) is liberated from the standard by "which he is exclusively a painter... In a communist society there are no

painters but at most people who engage in painting among other activities"; "all professions would, as it were, become hobbies."⁵³ Thanks to his inherited wealth, Caillebotte did not have to wait for the impending revolution in order to engage in painting among other activities, to treat painting as one hobby among many others. Yet, as his paintings and painterly practice indicate, Caillebotte experienced this freedom and its material underpinning as a problem: just as the rentiers described by Eric Hobsbawm, for whom success annulled "motivation" but not desire, the latter of which manifest in "lavish" spending that only served to open the horizon of another antagonism, this time with morality.⁵⁴ Seemingly unable to enjoy spending as spending, Caillebotte's hobbies were neither the bourgeois dilettantism described by John Rewald, nor the "strictly private and essentially worldless" activity that Arendt understands by the term "hobby."⁵⁵ They were instead a serious and multifaceted collocation and cross-pollination of world-building work-practices. For Caillebotte, the work of his various extra-artistic activities, and the sociability they implied, constituted worlds in which he could performatively reconfigure his identity.⁵⁶

It seems likely that Gustave was introduced to boating by Alfred Sisley in 1876. In that same year, he became a member of the Cercle de la Voile de Paris (CVP), a small club for sailing enthusiasts, which became "one of the most prestigious and active clubs" of the late nineteenth century.⁵⁷ Caillebotte purchased his first boat, *Iris*, in 1878, and would own thirteen more before his death in 1894.⁵⁸ Starting in the late 1870s Caillebotte began to race seriously, making a name for himself as one of the most successful yachtsmen in France.⁵⁹ Not satisfied with merely racing, Caillebotte was also a founding subscriber of *Le Yacht*, the first French review on boating, launched on 16 March 1878; he was instrumental in the organization and institutionalization of the sport; designed the world's first truly international handicapping system (*la jauge Caillebotte*); financed a dedicated, modern, and high quality racing yacht yard on the Seine near his own house (the Chantier Luce); invented a new class of sailing vessel (based on a sail area of 30m²); and designed twenty-five

boats (most of them between 1890 and 1893) which revolutionized French sailing with their thoroughly modern, and often experimental, designs.⁶⁰ Between 1881 and 1888, Caillebotte split his time between Paris and Petit Gennevilliers, a small riverside town about nine kilometers northwest of Paris in which he co-owned a property with Martial located proximate to the CVP clubhouse.⁶¹

Yachting, like other sports, was a profoundly classed and gendered activity.⁶² It developed primarily on rivers and around the French coast in the middle of the nineteenth century, and was dominated by aristocratic values and the desire for leisured sociability. However, with the increasing participation of bourgeois men, this older ideal came to be displaced by a sociability founded on equal athletic competition. By the 1880s middle-class yachting clubs, such as the CVP and the Union des yachts français (UYF), began to displace the older, elite circle, and instituted rules that deliberately excluded the lower classes from their regattas. Caillebotte's participation in yachting thus gave him access to a sociable arena largely untroubled by gender and class difference (indeed, thanks to his activity in the CVP, he was a party to that exclusion), where the serious enjoyment of a hobby—the ability to engage in a plural sociability mediated by objects produced by work—did not need to be carefully triangulated vis-à-vis the labor of others (as it had to be in *Les Raboteurs de parquet*, fig. 1). Caillebotte directly engaged in the work required to produce yachting's tangible frame (designing yachts and overseeing their fabrication in his *chantier*) and its intangible frame (working to administer the sport, establishing the institutions, rules, and customs by which its sociability could be enjoyed). Moreover, his prolific contributions to *Le Yacht*—for which he contributed letters and articles, writing infinitely more on the topic of yachting than he ever did on the question of art—indicate his desire to engage in the sociable speech Arendt understands as concomitant with action.⁶³ By expressing (often sharply) his perspective and encountering the perspectives of others—debates raged at meetings of the CVP and in the pages of *Le Yacht* about, for example, systems of

handicapping—Caillebotte benefited from a world- and subjectivity-thickening sociability.⁶⁴

Like yachting, philately offered Caillebotte object-enframed social interactions with other bourgeois men. Caillebotte began collecting stamps, likely encouraged by Martial, after the death of their mother.⁶⁵ Working closely together, the two brothers amassed an internationally significant collection of stamps ("an unparalleled achievement," as *The Philatelic Record* described it in 1890), sold in 1887 for the enormous sum of 400,000 francs.⁶⁶ Gustave and Martial pioneered the study of post marks, published an extensive study of Mexican stamps which was translated into English in 1885, contributed greatly to the study of Australian stamps, and were posthumously honored in 1921 as "Fathers of Philately" in the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists of the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain.⁶⁷ In addition to their association with the Société française de timbrologie, Gustave and Martial built a strong relationship with British philately, where Gustave was known as Georges: either Gustave or Martial attended the April 1883 meeting of the Philatelic Society, London, and both attended the Society's annual dinner held at the Masonic Temple, Holborn Restaurant on 11 December 1884.⁶⁸ The Caillebotte collection was "a veritable monument" to "the refined taste and love for work" of its creator.⁶⁹

Caillebotte's stamp collecting wasn't "strictly private and essentially worldless," nor was it asocial, anally-retentive, or pathological.⁷⁰ It was a form of work (recognized as such by his peers) that consisted in the production of tangible and intangible things (the collection as both an object and a system) which served as the basis for sociable exchange among the "world-wide freemasonry of Philately which finds for the collector a score of friends in whatever city or town, in whatever country, he may set foot."⁷¹ Although philatelists were keen to stress that their "hobby ... is very wide in its appeal to all classes," the reality was that it had, like yachting, been almost immediately colonized by bourgeois men (with the cheaper and more informal ends of the market

dominated by schoolboys).⁷² Stamp collecting represented one variety of a practice (that is, collecting in general) endemic to bourgeois sociability and central to the life of its institutionalization in the learned society. As Carol Harrison has shown, through the “rituals of learned society sociability, bourgeois Frenchmen established and performed class and gender identities.”⁷³

La Partie de bésigue (fig. 2) succeeds in rendering a coherent vision both of bourgeois sociability, and of Caillebotte's subjectivity, where earlier works had failed. It is less that Caillebotte is deploying innovative visual strategies akin to those described by Bridget Alsdorf vis-à-vis Henri Fantin-Latour's group portraits or Satish Padiyar and André Dombrowski vis-à-vis Paul Cézanne's *Joueurs de cartes* (alongside which this painting is usually contextualized).⁷⁴ Rather, Caillebotte is able to construct analogic connections that make the non-antagonistic (plural yet unmarked by difference) sociabilities and subjectivities that he fabricated and performed in the realms of philately and yachting accessible and active in the potentially alienating context of the bourgeois domestic interior. It was only when securely attached to forms of work that Caillebotte's bourgeois world could be made to cohere.

Yet, as *Autoportrait au chevalet* (fig. 9) demonstrated, the work of painting alone was not enough. Here, the shared work of the group consists in a group investment in the intangible framework of the game and a shared reliance on the tangible framework offered by cards and furniture. Engaged in a shared activity analogous to philately and yachting, these men act as symbolic surrogates for the self that Caillebotte worked elsewhere to construct alongside them (and here in painting works to construct through them). Analogously—but not isomorphically—to yachting, bezique pits bourgeois men against one another in a form of competition that relied on translating thought (intention) into activity by the manipulation of objects by hands. (Unlike his Yerres-period pictures of *canotiers* and *périssaires*, Caillebotte's yachting pictures most typically foreclose the phenomenological, instead focusing on the draughtsmanly qualities of the yachts—

their curved hulls, sweeping lines, and triangular sails—and the narrative action of the race.)

Analogously—but, again, not isomorphically—to philately, bezique consists in the careful manipulation and iterative ordering of a serial category of printed imagery according to *a priori* rules. Stamps, issued by the state in series ordered according to value and distinguished by color and design (like the unshuffled deck of cards, ordered according to rank and distinguished by the color and design of the suit), were disordered (shuffled) in the course of daily use, only to be carefully rearranged by the philatelist working alongside, and in competition with, his peers.⁷⁵ Where the philatelist orders according to scientific-taxonomic principles, the bezique player wishes to score a *meld* by laying prescribed series of cards face up upon the table.

Reflected in the work-bound relationships implied by the scene's cast and in the very materiality of the object of representation, Caillebotte emerges as a pluralized, multivalent, and multifaceted subject. As much as it is a group portrait, *La Partie de bésigue* (fig. 2) is a self-portrait, a portrait of the selves Caillebotte performed while yachting and stamp-collecting, reflected in the relationships those activities forged. Caillebotte's non-painterly work thus offered him tangible (yachts and stamps) and intangible (rules, customs, habits, sociabilities) things in relation to which a coherent social world could be brought into being and visibility. Unlike his peers, such as Cézanne—for whom painting was their all-encompassing *métier* and the sufficient basis of an identity—Caillebotte did not consider himself to be an artist exclusively or even foremost. Where Cézanne was a "fanatic" painter for whom "work" consisted in imbuing paintings with authentic sensations, for Caillebotte "work" was something altogether different.⁷⁶ Caillebotte never hinged his identity solely on being a painter; he claimed that the limit of his ambition as a painter was to have his works "hang in the antechamber of the living-room where the Renoirs and Cézannes are hung."⁷⁷ Staying true to his word, Caillebotte included none of his own paintings in his famous donation to the state; his work figured in another form: as collecting. Where Cézanne the painter, in

his depictions of men playing cards, is able to formally deconstruct the human form in order to resolve his experience of the split in the modern subject, for Caillebotte the rentier-painter-collector-horticulturalist-yachtsman-philatelist-politician, painting was not central enough to his self-identity to be able to act alone as the sole means for its reconfiguration.⁷⁸ As such, *La Partie de bésigue* presents a solution to modern alienation that was distinctively Caillebotte because it responded to Caillebotte's distinctive experience of it. Depicting a common world of things as the basis for the group sociability, *La Partie de bésigue* reveals by way of its aberrance from Caillebotte's other domestic interiors what this broader group is lacking: access to the multivalent form of work upon the back of which Caillebotte's world rested. Acutely conscious of his being a "part of yet apart from a number of different worlds," Caillebotte was a rentier, an amateur, but no less a worker.⁷⁹

Notes

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1. "[Il] s'astreignit au labeur de la peinture." Gustave Geffroy, "Notre temps : Gustave Caillebotte," *La Justice*, 13 June 1894, 1.
2. Gloria Groom, "Interiors and Portraits" in Anne Distel et al., *Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist*, exh. cat. (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago; New York: Abbeville Press, 1995), 180.
3. Even Michael Marrinan, whose account of Caillebotte self-consciously breaks with the literature to downplay any sense of discomfort or alienation, admits incompatibility between the world of Caillebotte's birth and the identity of the "diligent worker" implied by his painterly activity by acknowledging that it was "long

suppressed in deference to his family." See Marrinan, *Gustave Caillebotte: Painting the Paris of Naturalism, 1872–1887* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2016), 207.

4. First and third quotations from Tamar Garb, "Gustave Caillebotte's Male Figures: Masculinity, Muscularity and Modernity," in *Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-Siècle France* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 41–42; second quotation from Mary Morton and George T. M. Shackelford, "Introduction," in Morton and Shackelford, *Gustave Caillebotte: The Painter's Eye*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 21.

5. Morton, *Gustave Caillebotte: The Painter's Eye*, 21.

6. Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte*, 180.

7. W. Scott Haine, *The World of the Paris Café: Sociability Among the French Working Class 1789–1914* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 55–87.

8. "Inventaire Caillebotte après le décès de M. Caillebotte," Archives Nationales, Minutier Central, 1875.

9. Garb, *Bodies of Modernity*, 44–46.

10. "les mains sont reflétée par le vernis du meuble." G. d'Olby, "Salon de 1876: Avant l'ouverture – Exposition des intransigeants chez M. Durand-Ruel, rue Le Peletier, 11," *Le Pays*, 10 April 1876, 3. Reprinted in Ruth Berson, ed., *The New Painting: Impressionism 1874–1886. Documentation*, vol. 1: *Reviews* (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 1996), 100.

11. "bon jeune homme ... infailliblement écrasé." Louis Enault, "Mouvement artistique : L'Exposition des intransigeants dans la galerie de Durand-Ruel," *Le Constitutionnel*, 10 April 1876, 2. Reprinted in Berson, *The New Painting*, 83.

12. Marrinan, *Caillebotte*, 60–81; Marnin Young, *Realism in the Age of Impressionism: Painting and the Politics of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 58–89.

13. Marrinan, *Caillebotte*, 62. Readings of the street scenes that Caillebotte exhibited at the third Impressionist exhibition in 1877—*Rue de Paris; Temps de*

Pluie, *Le Pont de L'Europe*, and *Les Peintres en bâtiment*—have similarly tended to focus on this thematic of possession, from the perspective of which they are understood to be complex statements of class-empowered proprietorship, with the artist staking a claim (for himself, and his bourgeois peers) to his private and public environments by painting them. Julia Sagraves, "The Street," in Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte*, 95-98; Michael Marrinan, "Caillebotte as Professional Painter: From Studio to the Public Eye," in *Gustave Caillebotte and the Fashioning of Identity in Impressionist Paris*, ed. Norma Broude (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 24-26; Young, *Realism*, 58-89. In the immediate context of siege and Commune this taking possession amounted to a historical erasure. See Albert Boime, *Art and the French Commune: Imagining Paris after War and Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 77-96.

14. The rentier was understood as offering a conservative bulwark against revolutionary upheaval, as Larousse reports: "Les gouvernements, qui ont quelquefois de l'esprit, se sont aperçus que le *rentier* était tout le contraire d'une révolutionnaire ; qu'autant ce dernier aime le changement, le bouleversement, autant le *rentier* redoute les moindres variations politiques, au point de voir un cataclysme dans un simple changement de cabinet. Ils se sont donc dit : faisons le plus de *rentiers* possible ; gouvernons, s'il se peut, un peuple de *rentiers*." Pierre Larousse, "Rentier, ière," in *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle*, vol. 13 (Paris: Administration du Grand Dictionnaire Universel, 1875), 972. Young, *Realism*, 69; Marrinan, *Caillebotte*, 78-81, 127, 296.

15. Quotations in order Marrinan, *Caillebotte*, 62; Boime, *Art and the French Commune*, 77-96. See also Sagraves, "The Street," 88-101.

16. Montjoyeux [Jules Poignard], "Chroniques Parisiennes: Les indépendants," *Le Gaulois*, 18 April 1879, 1. Reprinted in Berson, *The New Painting*, 234.

17. Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 264; Thomas Piketty et al., "Inherited vs self-made wealth: Theory &

evidence from a rentier society (Paris 1872–1927)," *Explorations in Economic History* 51 (2014): 1-20.

18. "Bourgeois qui vit de son revenue, sans négoce, ni industrie." Émile Littré, "Rentier, ière," in *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette et C^{ie}, 1874), 1623. "Le *rentier* étant l'homme qui vit de ses rentes, on devrait donner indifféremment ce nom à quiconque possède un capital, biens-fonds ou argent, qui le fait vivre sans qu'il ait besoin de travailler." Larousse, "Rentier, ière," 972.

19. Eugen Weber, "Inheritance, Dilletantism, and the Politics of Maurice Barrès," in *My France: Politics, Culture, Myth* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991), 228.

20. Edward Lucie-Smith and Celestine Dars, *How the Rich Lived* (New York: Paddington Press, 1976), 55.

21. "M. Caillebotte est un travailleur, un chercheur hardi, sur lequel, je crois, on peut fonder des solides espérances." G. Rivière, "Les Intransigeants et les impressionnistes: Souvenirs du salon libre de 1877," *L'Artiste*, 1 November 1877, 298-302. Reprinted in Berson, *The New Painting*, 187.

22. "l'activité véritablement extraordinaire ... Le chapeau en arrière, les mains dans les poches, M. Caillebotte allait et venait, donnant des ordres, surveillant l'*accrochage* des toiles, et travaillant comme un commissionnaire, exactement comme s'il n'avait pas cent cinquante mille francs de rente." Fichtre [Gaston Vassy], "L'Actualité: L'Exposition des peintres indépendants," *Le Réveil*, 2 March 1882, 1. Reprinted in Berson, *The New Painting*, 387. Emphasis mine.

23. "Caillebotte eut vraiment la conviction en lui, et ce qu'il laisse dépasser l'occupation de l'amateur. Il aurait pu ne prendre ici qu'un prétexte à créer des intermèdes de sa vie, se donner le luxe facile et inutile d'une peinture superficielle. Il était maître de son temps, sûr du lendemain, et il avait la passion du jardinage et la passion des bateaux. Tout de même il s'astreignit au labeur de la peinture." Geffroy, "Notre Temps," 1.

24. "un goût sûr et l'amour du travail." "Mort de M. Georges Caillebotte," *Le Collectionneur de timbres-poste* 160 (February 1894): 31. Second quotation from "The Late M. Georges Caillebotte," *The London Philatelist* 3, no. 27 (March 1894): 61.
25. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 7.
26. *Ibid.*, 83, 96, 118.
27. "[T]he common world [produced by work] gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other." *Ibid.*, 52.
28. *Ibid.*, 8.
29. *Ibid.*, 167.
30. *Ibid.*, 168, 173.
31. *Ibid.*, 173.
32. *Ibid.*, 126-127.
33. *Ibid.*, 118-126.
34. *Ibid.*, 179.
35. *Ibid.*, 52.
36. *Ibid.* Emphasis mine.
37. Garb, *Bodies of Modernity*, 29.
38. *Ibid.*, 28.
39. Mary Morton et al., "Viewing Others: Portraits," in Morton, *Gustave Caillebotte: The Painter's Eye*, 162.
40. Arendt, 169. "Works of art are [thus] thought things, but this does not prevent their being things," which is to say that the objectification of thought depends upon the manual "workmanship" of fabrication. *Ibid.*, 168-169.
41. *Ibid.*, 153.
42. *Ibid.*, 118-119.
43. The clear allusion that *Les Peintres en bâtiment*, 1877, for example, makes to Caillebotte's own craft by, firstly, "literally foreground[ing] the physical labour of painting" in its "extraordinarily tactile paint *matière* and visible brittle-brush *facture*" and, secondly, by encoding a pun on the

phrase *peinture d'impression* (which in "the housepainter's manual ... is the term used for the first coat of paint applied by the worker" as well as signifying the Impressionist painter's work), has been well-noted. Quotations in order Anthea Callen, *The Work of Art: Plein Air Painting and Artistic Identity in Nineteenth-century France* (London: Reaktion Books, 2015), 154; Émile Bergerat, "Revue artistique : Les Impressionnistes et leur exposition," *Journal officiel de la République française*, 17 April 1877, 2917-2918. Reprinted in Berson, *The New Painting*, 127. See also Anthea Callen, *The Art of Impressionism : Painting Technique & the Making of Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 110.

44. Michael Fried, "Caillebotte's Impressionism," in Broude, *Gustave Caillebotte*, 82.

45. *Ibid.*

46. *Ibid.*, 107.

47. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 48. On, for example, Zola's deployment of affective excess see Susan Harrow, *Zola, The Body Modern: Pressures and Prospects of Representation* (Oxford: Legenda, 2010); Hannah Thompson, *Taboo: Corporeal Secrets in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Legenda, 2013); Fredric Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism* (London: Verso, 2013).

48. Marrinan, "Caillebotte as Professional Painter," 25.

49. Mary Morton et al., "Looking In: Urban Interior," in Morton, *Gustave Caillebotte: The Painter's Eye*, 154.

50. Elizabeth Benjamin, "All the Discomforts of Home: Caillebotte and the Nineteenth-Century Bourgeois Interior," in Morton, *Gustave Caillebotte: The Painter's Eye*, 85-97. On the identification of the figures see Kirk Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 214-215n1.

51. On the potential (gendered) dangers of comfort and languor see Benjamin, "Discomforts of Home," 85-97. See also Deborah L. Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France: Politics, Psychology, and Style* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989).

52. Karl Marx, "The German Ideology," Marxist Internet Archive,
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01a.htm>.
53. *Ibid.*; Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 118n65.
54. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital 1848–1875* (London: Abacus, 2008), 276–277.
55. John Rewald, *The History of Impressionism*, 4th ed. (London: Secker and Warburg, 1980), 346; Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 117–118.
56. Led by the narrative centrality of Brault and Martial in *La Partie de bésigue* (fig. 2), I will focus in this present work on yachting and philately.
57. Daniel Charles, "Caillebotte and Boating," in *Gustave Caillebotte*, Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark et al., exh. cat. (Copenhagen: Ordrupgaard; Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2008), 110. Quote from Denis Jallet and Stella Goldenberg, "International Yachting in the Late Nineteenth Century: French, British, and American Inter-Relationships and Organisation," *Sport in History* 31, no. 3 (2011): 314. Less than four years later, Gustave would become its Vice-President. See Daniel Charles, *Le Mystère Caillebotte: L'œuvre architecturale de Gustave Caillebotte peintre impressionniste, jardinier, philatéliste et régatier* (Grenoble: Editions Glénat, 1994), 19–24.
58. Charles, *Le Mystère Caillebotte*, 24.
59. Between 1888 and 1889, nobody in France won more races than Gustave Caillebotte. See Charles, "Caillebotte and Boating," 116.
60. Charles, *Le Mystère Caillebotte*, 23, 47–48. Caillebotte played a central role in the creation of the *L'Union des yachts français* (UYF) in 1892, a representative national authority. "Caillebotte and Boating," 110–117.
61. Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark, "Gustave Caillebotte; In the Midst of Impressionism. An Introduction," in Fonsmark et al., *Gustave Caillebotte*, exh. cat. (Copenhagen: Ordrupgaard; Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2008), 17.
62. Jallet and Goldenberg, 310–314; Eugen Weber, "Gymnastics and Sports in Fin-de-Siècle France: Opium of

the Classes?" *The American Historical Review* 76, no. 1 (1971): 70-98; Weber, "Pierre de Coubertin and the Introduction of Organized Sport in France," *Journal of Contemporary History* 5, no. 2 (1970): 3-26.

63. Such texts are quoted in Charles, *Le Mystère Caillebotte*, *passim*.

64. *Ibid.*, 55-59.

65. R. D. Beech, "Note on Caillebotte as a Philatelist," in Anne Distel et al., *Gustave Caillebotte: The Unknown Impressionist*, exh. cat. (London: The Royal Academy of Arts, 1996), 206. Caillebotte's immersion in philately and yachting thus coincides with the breakdown of the sociability offered by the Impressionist group, in which tensions were visible as early as 1879, and erupted acutely in 1880 and 1881.

66. Charles, *Le Mystère Caillebotte*, 62.

67. *The Philatelic Record* 12, no. 144 (December 1890): 204; M.M. [Gustave and Martial] Caillebotte, "The Stamps of Mexico," *The Philatelic Record* 7, no. 82 (November 1885): 175-182; 7, no. 83 (December 1885): 198-202; 8, no. 86 (March 1886): 38-40; 8, no. 87 (April 1886): 55-58; 8, no. 88 (May 1886): 75-76; 8, no. 89 (June 1886): 86-87. See also Charles, *Le Mystère Caillebotte*, 61; "The Late M. Georges Caillebotte," 61-62.

68. *The Philatelic Record* 5, no. 60 (January 1884): 209; "Dinner to the Philatelic Society, London," *The Philatelic Record* 6, no. 71 (December 1884): 223.

69. "un véritable monument"; "un goût sûr et l'amour du travail," "Mort de M. Georges Caillebotte," 31.

70. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 117.

71. Quotation from Fred J. Melville, *All About Postage Stamps* (London: T. Werner Laurie, [1913]), viii.

72. Quotation from *ibid.*, 210. On the colonization of philately see Steven M. Gelber, "Free Market Metaphor: The Historical Dynamics of Stamp Collecting," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34, no. 4 (1992): 742-769.

73. Carol E. Harrison, *The Bourgeois Citizen in Nineteenth-Century France: Gender, Sociability, and the Uses of*

Emulation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 51.

74. Bridget Alsdorf, *Fellow Men: Fantin-Latour and the Problem of the Group in Nineteenth-Century French Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); André Dombrowski, "The Cut and Shuffle: Card playing in Cézanne's Card Players," in *Modernist Games: Cézanne and His Card Players*, ed. Satish Padiyar (London: Courtauld Books Online, 2013), 35-67; Satish Padiyar, "Building a World Between Men (Or Cézanne with Arendt)," *ibid.*, 123-148. Padiyar likewise finds Arendt's writing useful for understanding how Cézanne relied "on the power of objects to produce a world of human relatedness" and recognized "the preeminent modern problem in the face of modern mass society ... is precisely to 'live together in the world.'" *Ibid.*, 134. As noted, the crucial difference between Cézanne and Caillebotte lies in the relative importance each man placed on his artistic work as the fulcrum of an identity. Moreover, where Cézanne is able to plausibly identify with the working community he gathers around the table, a complex (and not always altogether coherent) process of analogical association was necessary for Caillebotte to understand workers and understand his peers as workers. On the valency of Cézanne's self-presentation as a worker see Callen, *The Work of Art*, 119-154. Finally, the affective, libidinal dimension that the pipe opens for Cézanne (in Padiyar's reading) is here and elsewhere foreclosed by Caillebotte (returning only in his late nudes).

75. Gustave and Martial "[worked] heart and soul together." *The Philatelic Record* 12: 204.

76. Paul Cézanne in conversation with Joachim Gasquet, *Cézanne* (Paris: Bernheim-Jeune, 1926) as partially reprinted in P. M. Doran ed., *Conversations avec Cézanne* (Paris: Macula, 1978), 148. Cited and translated in Joachim Pissarro, *Pioneering Modern Painting: Cézanne and Pissarro 1865-1885*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2005), 31.

77. Gustave Caillebotte quoted in Jean Renoir, *Renoir: My Father*, trans. Randolph Weaver and Dorothy Weaver (London: Collins, 1962), 237.

78. Padiyar convincingly identifies these formal interventions as “[quilting and stitching] together the body and the table in the manner of a Lacanian *point de capiton*.” Padiyar, “Building a World,” 138.

79. “I am an amateur of roses signifies that I research them, that I collect them” (“je suis amateur de roses signifie que je les recherche, que j’en fais collection”) Émile Littré, “Amateur,” in *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette et C^{ie}, 1873), 123.

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AESTHETICS

ART

GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE

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